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Robert Aitken
artistic director

new music concerts presents

**TAN
DUN**

**Melissa
HUI**



Sunday, November 19, 1995
7:15 pm Introduction
8:00 pm Concert
Premiere Dance Theatre

the music of
**Tan Dun and
Melissa Hui**

Tan Dun

Memorial 19 Fucks (1993) ▲ dur 14'

Tan Dun, voice

John Hess, piano

Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Melissa Hui

Solstice (1994) dur 7'

Robert Aitken, piccolo

Keith Atkinson, oboe d'amore

John Hess, piano

Trevor Tureski, percussion

Melissa Hui

Foreign Affairs (1994) ▲ dur 10'

Douglas Stewart, flute/piccolo

Cynthia Steljes, oboe

Stanley McCartney, clarinet

Fraser Jackson, bassoon

Joan Watson, French horn

Michael White, trumpet

Robert Ferguson, trombone

Trevor Tureski, percussion

Erica Goodman, harp

John Hess, piano

Fujiko Imajishi, violin

Marie Berard, violin

Douglas Perry, viola

Simon Fryer, cello

Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Robert Aitken, conductor

Programme

INTERMISSION

Tan Dun

Lament: Autumn Wind (1993) ▲ dur 14'

Jacklyn Pipher, soprano

Cynthia Steljes, oboe

Stanley McCartney, bass clarinet

Fujiko Imajishi, violin

Simon Fryer, cello

Jeffrey McFadden, guitar

Trevor Tureski, percussion

Tan Dun, conductor

Tan Dun

C-A-G-E (1993) ▲ dur 10'

Tan Dun, piano

Tan Dun

Circle with Four Trios (1992) ▲ dur 15'

Robert Aitken, piccolo

Cynthia Steljes, oboe

Stanley McCartney, bass clarinet

Fujiko Imajishi, violin

Douglas Perry, viola

Simon Fryer, cello

Bill Kuinka, mandolin

Jeffrey McFadden, guitar

Erica Goodman, harp

John Hess, piano

Trevor Tureski, percussion

Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Tan Dun, conductor

This evening's performance is being recorded for
broadcast Sunday, April 23rd, 1995, 10:05 pm
on CBC's **2 New Hours** with host Richard Paul
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SOCAN
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new music concerts presents
the music of

TAN DUN MELISSA HUI

Born in the rustic village of Si Mao in the Province of Hunan, China, on 18 August 1957, **Tan Dun's** coming of age was shaped by the shamanistic, pre-Confucian traditions instilled in him by his grandmother. During the Cultural Revolution of the 1970's Tan was one of many young people sent to help plant rice among the peasants of the Huangjin commune. It was at this point in his life that his growing interest in music led him to arrange the folk-songs of the region for whatever instruments were at hand. His skills as a fiddle-player led to a curious twist of fate when he was recruited as the leader of a traveling Beijing opera troupe, shortly after a tragic incident in which the boat carrying their members capsized and a number of the musicians drowned.

At the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1978, Tan was one of thousands of students competing for thirty coveted seats in the newly-reopened composition department of the Central Conservatory in Peking. After decades of suppression, Chinese composers suddenly had access to the monumental works of modern music and were able to attend lectures by visiting foreign composers such as Alexander Goehr, George Crumb, Hans Werner Henze, Toru Takemitsu, Isang Yun, and Chou Wen-Chung.

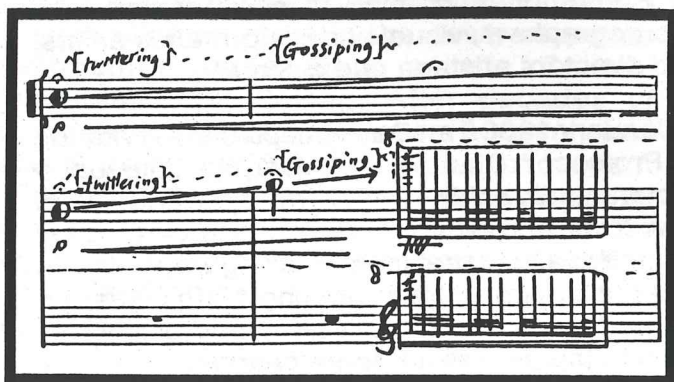
In the course of his eight years of studies in Beijing, Tan composed his first symphony *Li Sao* and was quickly recognised as one of the leading composers of his generation. The Weber prize awarded in Dresden in 1983 for his *String Quartet: Feng Ya Song* was the first such international prize awarded to a Chinese composer since 1949. His reward for this achievement was the imposition of a six-month ban on the performance and broadcast of his music in China by Communist Party hardliners critical of his "*inclination toward Western taste and lack of ideological fervour*".

Despite the purportedly radical innovations Tan and his colleagues adopted in reaction to what they had learned, they continued to incorporate elements of traditional Chinese music in their work through a characteristic blending of Eastern and Western techniques. As a result, a number of Tan's works of the 1980's are conceived for Asian ensembles and incorporate typical Chinese, Japanese and Indonesian instruments and performance practices. More recently he has also shown a great interest in experimental works for ceramics, for water, and for paper, often created in collaboration with choreographers, visual and performance artists, and directors of stage and cinema.

In January 1986 Tan Dun accepted the invitation of Professor Chou Wen-Chung to take up a doctoral fellowship at Columbia University in New York and was introduced to a completely unfamiliar and sometimes shocking way of life. In order to support himself during his studies, he washed dishes at the university and played his violin in the streets for spare change.

While the fortunes of a composer in China continue to shift with the changing political winds, Tan's continuing residence in New York has seen his music becoming increasingly global not only in spirit and concept, but also in fact. In 1993 he became the youngest composer ever to receive the prestigious Japanese *Suntory Prize* and his compositions have received highly successful performances by major orchestras and ensembles in New York, Helsinki, Tokyo, Edinburgh, Berlin, Mexico City and Beijing.

Tan Dun's music has been described by John Cage as "*the presence of sound as the voice of nature...*". Tan himself acknowledges the profound influence of Cage as having "*led me to discover structures and sounds as yet unknown*". Shostakovich, a composer who also lived under a turbulent Communist regime, is credited for having "*taught me to express deep human and personal voices*", while the works of the Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu led him to the realization that "*Western and Eastern instruments can be part of the same colour palette*"



At the beginning of **Circle with Four Trios, Conductor and Audience (1992)** the conductor is seen articulating silences "*with a sense of ritual ... like a high priest*"; the instrumentalists play from four corners of the room, surrounding the audience, which at certain moments is required to perform along with the musicians, according to the following instructions:

Instructions for Audience Vocalizing

There are three places in which the audience is asked to perform with the musicians. The conductor will rehearse these sections just before the piece, and establish a method of cueing.

1) After the conductor's text, "**Did you see the sound?**", the audience responds in 'breath-voice' (like an exhaling sigh), "**haaa**".

2) After the conductor's text, "**Can you write it on the sky?**", the audience responds again, "**haaa**".

This is the text:

Conductor:

Did you see the sound?

Audience:

Haaa.

Conductor:

hear the shape

catch the wind

Can you write it on the sky?

Audience:

Haaa.

(On the **whispered** repeat of the conductor's text, there is **no** vocalization by the audience.)

3) In the climax of the piece, the audience is to vocalize/improvise for about 10 seconds on the ideas of 'twittering' - 'gossiping' - 'shouting', gradually becoming louder and rising in pitch.

Memorial 19 Fucks (1993) carries the dedication, *A memorial to injustice, to all people who have been fucked over.* The text of this theatrically conceived work is made up of the word "fuck" as it is expressed in 19 different languages, and was created by the composer with help from taxi-drivers and friends in many countries. The instrumental gestures of the music are extended by interchanging repetitions, canonic treatments ("progressions"), and reading the music backwards.

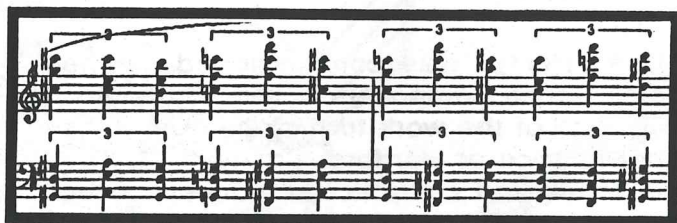
Lament: Autumn Wind (1993) was commissioned by the Scottish Early Music Consort with the support of the Holst Foundation and the Scottish Arts Council. The work has a variable instrumentation and may be performed with either ancient or modern instruments. As in *Memorial* several parts of the music are determined by repeats or progressions similar to a round; these are sometimes completed, sometimes shortened and sometimes reversed. The text is that of a traditional folk-song of the late Ming Dynasty (16th century), the translation of which reads as follows:

*The autumn wind is clear,
the autumn moon bright
Fallen leaves gather and scatter
a poor crow is startled from his rest.
When will we meet again?
for tonight we cannot be together.
Since you have entered*

Notes

*my gate of longing
you must know how bitter
the yearning.
Long lovesickness
is long remembered
short lovesickness is eternal.
If I had known before that love
would so entangle me
perhaps it would have been better
never to meet.*

C-A-G-E (1993), described by its composer as a “**fingering for piano**”, is dedicated to the memory of John Cage (1912-1992), one of the first Western composers to be profoundly influenced by Asian philosophies, particularly through his life-long devotion to chance procedures derived through divinations from the ancient (12th century B.C.) Chinese “Book of Changes”, the *I Ching*. **C-A-G-E** explores all possible resonances of the piano *except* those that can be made from the keyboard.



Melissa Hui describes her compositional style as “*very economical...I don’t write many notes. And the more I compose the more economical I become. I really believe that less is best.*” Her music is as profoundly influenced by Asian, African, and other ethnic musics as it is by popular culture and American minimalism.

Ms. Hui was born in Hong Kong, raised in Vancouver, and currently resides in the United States. She graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor's degree in piano in 1987. Her commitment to composition blossomed through her work at the Banff Centre under the tutelage of **Robert Altken** (her earliest ensemble work, *Shadow Play*, was premiered there in 1988) and prepared her to pursue graduate studies in composition at the California Institute of the Arts (M.F.A., 1990) and Yale University (M.M.A., 1992).

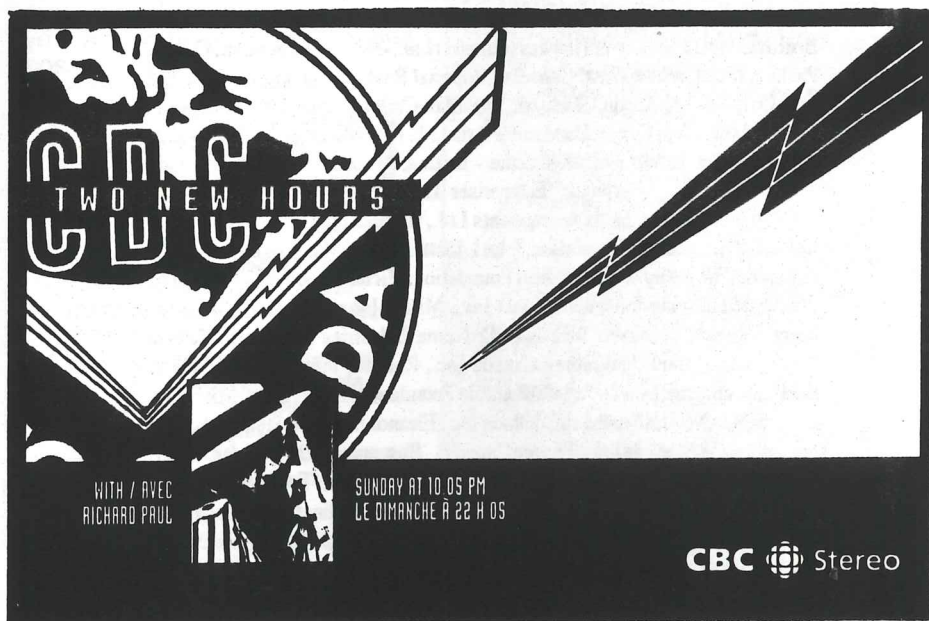
In the past five years Ms. Hui has garnered an astonishing degree of awards, grants and commissions from the Canada Council, the Banff Centre, CBC, PROCAN (1988), Vancouver New Music (1989), CAPAC (1988, 1989), SOCAN (1991, 1994), the Winnipeg Symphony's Canadian Composers Competition and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's Composers Forum (1992). She is currently an assistant professor at Stanford University in California.

Solstice (1994) was commissioned by the Common Sense Composers Collective; the first performance of the work took place during the summer solstice at Hartford, Connecticut. The ringing tones and complex resonances of the three temple bells which are at the heart of the music are echoed by fleeting gestures from the other instruments. The piccolo plays only in the last moments of the work and is likewise restricted to three pitches; the piano has but four tones to conjure with - a pair of perfect fourths. Only the *oboe d'amore*, resounding its handful of pitches into the piano throughout the work, is allowed to suggest an emotional aspect appropriate to its name.

Notes

Foreign Affairs (1994) was commissioned by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble with the financial assistance of the Canada Council and was premiered by them in October of 1994. Again the contemplative tolling of the composer's personal set of temple bells plays an important part at the outset of the work, eventually giving way to the muffled, steady pulse of a low drum and the introduction of carefully articulated "*pods of sound*", restrained at first but gradually building in power and complexity. Strong contrasts between these accumulating densities and the more isolated moments for solo instruments suggest Hui's self-descriptive observation, "*the dominant feature of my music is that the development happens between the lines*".

Programme notes by Daniel Charles Foley



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As part of its Silver Anniversary Celebrations, New Music Concerts invites composers to submit scores for chamber ensemble. The winning composer will receive a cash award of \$3,000 and a performance on the New Music Concerts' series.

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Chamber works for 3 to 15 performers including not more than 4 singers are eligible. Electronics are acceptable.

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The competition is open to all Canadian citizens and landed immigrants who were born on or after May 1, 1959. Each composer may submit up to three works which must not have been previously performed in public or accepted for performance.

APPLICATION

Composers are asked to send 2 copies of each score. In the event of a prize winning work, it is the responsibility of the composer to provide performance material of professional quality. The scores should be marked with a code name chosen by the composer and must be accompanied by a sealed envelope bearing the same code word and containing the participant's name, address and curriculum vitae. Neither the submitted materials nor the sealed envelope may bear any indication revealing the authorship other than the code word.

DEADLINE AND JUDGING

All materials must be received by May 1, 1995. An independent jury of four renowned composers and performers plus a chairman will choose the prize winning works. The chairman will vote only in the case of a tie. Prize money will be awarded at the discretion of the jury and the decision of the judges will be final. The winner will be announced on or before June 15, 1995.

*Further prizes are anticipated depending upon available funds.

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